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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/773,913	02/02/2001	Hiroshi Shirakawa	202689USXSRD	8108
22850 7590 04/24/2008 OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314				
EXAMINER HAVAN, THU THAO				
ART UNIT 3693		PAPER NUMBER		
NOTIFICATION DATE 04/24/2008		DELIVERY MODE ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary**Application No.**

09/773,913

Applicant(s)

SHIRAKAWA ET AL.

Examiner

THU-THAO HAVAN

Art Unit

3693

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 February 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 24-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 24-29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

Detailed Action

Response to Amendment

Claims 24-29 are pending. This action is in response to the remarks received February 8, 2008.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 24-29 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 24-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The basis of this rejection is set forth below:

whether the invention produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result.

For a claimed invention to be statutory, the claimed invention must produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result. Mere ideas in the abstract (i.e. abstract idea, law of nature, natural phenomena) that do not apply, invoice, or use fail to promote the "progress of science and the useful arts" (i.e., the physical sciences as opposed to social sciences, for example) and therefore are found to be non-statutory subject

matter. For a process claim to pass muster, the recited process must somehow apply, involve, or use to produce a useful, concrete, and tangible result. A mere intended or nominal use of a component does not confer statutory subject matter to an otherwise abstract idea if the component does not apply, involve, use, or advance the underlying process. Furthermore, the preamble is generally not accorded any patentable weight where it merely recites the purpose of a process or the intended use of a structure, and where the body of the claim does not depend on the preamble for completeness but, instead, the process steps or structural limitations are able to stand alone. *See In re Hirao*, 535 F.2d 67, 190 USPQ 15 (CCPA 1976) and *Kropa v. Robie*, 187 F.2d 150, 152, 88 USPQ 478, 481 (CCPA 1951). In the instant case, the preamble of claim 24 recites "A system". However, the claim as a whole recites the steps of intended use of a structure (i.e., system). Thus, the preamble fails to give "life, meaning, vitality" to the claim as a whole. *See MPEP 2111.02*. Because the preamble is not accorded any patentable weight as stated above, claim 1 as a whole merely recites steps in the abstract for use an auction system including a computer disposed in a site accessible without producing any useful, concrete, and tangible result. For example, the steps of "a selection section..."; "an input section..."; "a borrowing intermediacy section..."; "a borrowing request storage..."; "a lending intermediacy section...", "a lending offer storage...", and "etc...", which comprise the claim as a whole are mere steps in the abstract without setting forth a practical application for producing any useful, concrete, and tangible result. (*See Interim Guidelines, IV (C)(1, 2)*).

Claims 25-29, which depend on claim 24 also fail the test above because they fail to limit to a particular structure.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thu Thao Havan whose telephone number is (571) 272-8111. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 6am-2pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Kramer can be reached on (571) 272-6783. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at (866) 217-9197 (toll-free).

/Thu Thao Havan/
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4/14/08

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

The basis of this rejection is set forth below:

whether the invention falls under the statutory category of a process, machine, article of manufacture or composition of matter; and whether it produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result. In the instant application, claims 1-8 recite "a message format" and its characteristic. A message format as claimed pertains to computer-related nonstatutory subject matter. It is merely a listing of data, i.e., non-functional descriptive material. In other words, a "mere arrangements or compilations of facts or data, without any functional interrelationship is not a process, machine, manufacture or composition of matter". (See *Interim Guidelines, Annex IV (b)*).

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Furthermore, claims 1-8 as recited, fail to relate to a practical application that produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result. (*See Interim Guidelines, IV (C)(1, 2)*).